

# Colonia Libertad about to celebrate its first year

By Julee Syverson

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Developed by Women Organizing Resources, Knowledge and Services (WORK) and the Farmworker Housing Development Corporation (FHDC), Colonia Libertad is Salem's first housing development for low-income Spanish-speaking immigrant farmworkers.

Completed in the summer of 2005 and supported by more than a million dollars in Oregon Housing and Community Services funds, Colonia Libertad provides temporary year-round housing as well as educational and outreach programs for farmworkers. A residents' association manages the property and services, and the tenants elect representatives to contribute ideas and participate in decision-making with the FHDC.

Colonia Libertad's 48 units feature one to four bedrooms, some accessible to people with disabilities. 100 children, half of them under six years old, live in the complex. The buildings include recreational facilities, a children's center and a community center that offers programs to connect residents with services and opportunities in Oregon.

FHCD offers classes on safety, leadership, computer skills, public transit system use, Oregon driving regulations and US citizenship. Tenants can learn English through a partnership with Chemeketa College. Jaime Arredondo, the Community Organizer at Colonia Libertad, was himself the child of an immigrant family. After his graduation from Willamette University, he began working for Farmworker Housing Development Corporation, the non-profit group that manages Colonia Libertad.



Colonia Libertad's 48 units house local farmworkers and their families year round.

#### Development Funding Sources:

- Predevelopment Loan Program
- Farmworker Tax Credit Program
- Low Income Tax Credit Program
- Oregon Affordable Housing Tax Credit Program
- Low Income Weatherization Program

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In a spring presentation to OHCS staff, Arredondo acknowledged the help OHCS funds have provided for the Colonia Libertad development project, and says the apartments provide more than just shelter to its residents. "In addition to providing families a comfortable place to live, the complex provides tenants a sense of community," said Arredondo.

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Oregon Housing and Community Services is the state housing finance agency, providing financial and program support to create and preserve opportunities for quality, affordable housing for lower income Oregonians. The agency also administers federal and state antipoverty, homeless and energy assistance community service programs.

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